

REMARKS

Initially, applicants would like to thank Examiner Dang for granting an interview and for his time spent in the interview.

Claims 5 and 11-13 were previously pending in the application. New claims 14-16 are added. Therefore, claims 5 and 11-16 are presented for consideration.

Claims 5 and 11 are rejected as unpatentable over CHANG et al. 6,566,224. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

As agreed at the interview, claim 5 is amended to recite subjecting an exposed inside upper end portion of the trench to halogen oxidation with dichloroethylene and oxygen.

Accordingly, as set forth at the interview, the exposed trench is subjected to the halogen oxidation.

In contrast, as discussed at the interview, the trench 36 of the CHANG reference is filled with silicon dioxide 38 prior to oxidation. As indicated in the Interview Summary, the amendment to claim 5 is thus believed to distinguish over CHANG's oxidation process.

Claim 11 is amended along the lines of claim 5 and thus the analysis above regarding claim 5 is equally applicable to claim 11.

Claims 12 and 13 are rejected as unpatentable over CHANG et al. in view of CHAU et al. 5,891,809. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

CHAU et al. is only cited for the teaching of a nitrogen flow rate with respect to an oxygen flow rate. CHAU does not teach or suggest subjecting an exposed inner wall of the trench to halogen oxidation with dichloroethylene and oxygen as recited in claim 11. As set forth above, CHANG does not teach or suggest what is recited in claim 11. Since claims 12 and 13 depend from claim 11 and further define the invention, the proposed combination of references would not have rendered obvious claims 12 and 13.

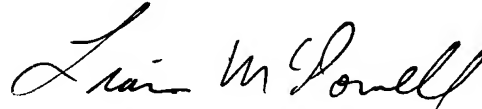
New claims 14-16 correspond to previously presented claims 6-8 and are dependent from claim 5. The new claims are believed patentable at least for the reasons that claim 5 is believed patentable over the cited prior art.

In view of the present amendment and the foregoing remarks, it is believed that the present application has been placed in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 25-0120 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17.

Respectfully submitted,

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